

June 2024

**Together, we can use media to help the next generations grow in the hope and love of Christ.
Your gift before 30 June
will make hope go further.**

Dear friend of Lutheran Media and Messages of hope,

My name is Ben, and I'm the first assistant bishop at Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District and the Chair of the Lutheran Media Committee of Management.

And, as a father to a beautiful 10-year-old girl who joined our family just a couple of years ago, I feel it is fitting to share why, now, more than ever, our community and children need hope.

You see, my prayer for my own daughter is that she will grow in truth and the knowledge that she is not the reason that she has gone through what she has but to deeply know that while some of what she has gone through will always be part of her story – she has the opportunity to create a new story. One where she is reminded daily that she is known, she is seen, and she is valued.

My hope is that this becomes the reality for *all* children and individuals in our community.

But with the reality of the world we live in, this is challenging.

In 2022, a national survey reported a shocking increase in mental illness in children as young as 18 months and as old as 18 years compared with just two years ago.

More specifically, for kids aged 6 to 12, there has been a noticeable increase in various mental health issues, like a 45 per cent rise in social anxiety disorder, 39 per cent rise in peer relationship problems, 36 per cent rise in excessive screen time, and 35 per cent rise in educational concerns. And for those aged 13 to 18, these have seen the highest spikes in several problems, including an outrageous 65 per cent increase in depression, 60 per cent increase in social anxiety disorder, 60 per cent increase in generalised anxiety disorder, 50 per cent increase in self-harm or suicidal thoughts, and 48 per cent increase in peer relationship difficulties, as reported by psychologists.*

As a pastor and father, this breaks my heart. Don't get me wrong. I am thankful that in our own homes and churches, we can create a place for kids to be connected, experience the love of Jesus and know what a healthy community feels like.

But what about those children who will never step foot in a church?

This is why I'm so passionate about being part of Lutheran Media, which is on the frontlines making a change and sharing *Messages of hope* through the media.

This tax time, you can make our messages of hope go further by helping Lutheran Media continue communicating gospel messages in culturally relevant ways that reach these generations through radio, podcasts, social media, email, print and more.

With your tax-deductible gift before 30 June, together, we can create a world where every vulnerable child finds hope, comfort and purpose through the power of uplifting and transformative content.

We all hold an unchanging message of hope in the gospel of Jesus. But knowing how to share it with a young, searching generation that is bombarded by so much pressure, negativity, and hopelessness in the world around them is where many fall short. Lutheran Media is filling that gap.

We would love to share *more* inspiring stories of hope through our outlets.

Real stories that allow kids everywhere to connect with the fact that there is a God who can give them joy and peace in any circumstance – no matter if they come from a believing family or not. As Romans 15:13 says, **'May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace'**. And to then connect these children and their families with a local church that will journey with them through it all.

But we can't do it alone. The biggest temptation for all of us, myself included, is to only invest in things that give us something in return. But that's not how Jesus served. And as someone who has personally supported our mission, we know you truly do understand.

This tax time, we are boldly asking you to help in a way we will never be able to repay, but with a tax-deductible gift that will have an eternal impact on so many vulnerable children and individuals in the community who are struggling, hopeless and in need.

Your vital donation will help us raise the \$200,000 we need to fund the resources that will make hope go further. Of course, the more we can raise, the more lives will be transformed.

You can give a donation now at lutheranmedia.org.au/donate, or simply fill in and post the donation slip to us or call us on **1800 353 350**.

One hundred per cent of your donation funds *Messages of hope*.

You can listen, watch and read these *Messages of hope* and share them with your family and friends any time. We can email you a link to the latest message. Simply enter your email at www.messagesofhope.org.au/subscribe

Thank you for your kindness and generous support to share hope with children and individuals who feel lost, hopeless or are searching.



Rev Ben Hentschke BTh/BMin | DipBus(Gov) | DipHRM | FICDA | GAICD | MIML
First Assistant Bishop at Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District
Chair, Committee of Management of Lutheran Media Inc



PS We already have over 7 million active listeners in Australia, New Zealand and beyond who are tuning in to hear a *Message of hope*. Your gift before 30 June will make hope go further.

*Statistics: <https://psychology.org.au/about-us/news-and-media/media-releases/2022/children-18-months-to-18-years-showing-serious-men>